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*The Analogy between the LIGHT of INSPIRATION and the LIGHT of
LEARNING, as Qualifications for the Ministry.*

A
S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN THE

CATHEDRAL CHURCH

OF

G L O C E S T E R,

AT A

PUBLIC ORDINATION OF PRIESTS AND DEACONS,

On SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1787.

BY THE

Rev. SAMUEL HORSLEY, LL.D. F.R.S.

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T O

THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,

S A M U E L,

BY DIVINE PERMISSION, LORD BISHOP OF GLOCESTER,

THIS DISCOURSE,

PUBLISHED IN OBEDIENCE TO HIS LORDSHIP'S COMMAND,

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED, BY

HIS LORDSHIP'S,

MOST DUTIFUL AND OBEDIENT

SON AND SERVANT,

THE PREACHER.

TO
THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,

S A M U E L

BY DIVINE PERMISSION, LORD BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER.

THIS DISCOURSE,



PUBLISHED IN OBEEDIENCE TO HIS LORDSHIP'S

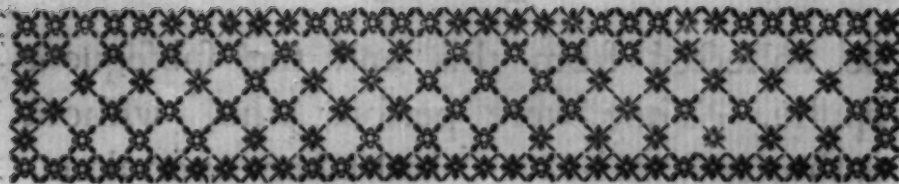
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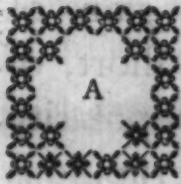
SON AND SERVANT,

THE BREACHER.



1 Cor. ii. 2.

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified.

 AMONG various abuses in the *Corinthian* church, which this epistle, as appears from the matter of it, was intended to reform; a spirit of schism and dissension, to which an attempt to give a new turn to the doctrines of Christianity had given rise, was in itself the most criminal, and in its consequences the most pernicious. Who the authors of this evil were, is not mentioned; and it were idle to enquire. They were run after in their day; but their names have been long since forgotten, nor is any thing remembered of them, but the mischief which they did. The general character of the men, and the complexion of their doctrine, may easily

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be collected from this and the subsequent epistle. They were persons who, without authority from heaven, had taken upon themselves to be preachers of the gospel. The motive, from which they had engaged in a business, for which they were neither qualified nor commissioned, was not any genuine zeal for the propagation of the truth, or any charitable desire to reclaim the profligate, and to instruct the ignorant; but the love of gain, of power, and applause: the desire, in short, of those advantages, which ever attend popularity in the character of a teacher. A scrupulous adherence to the plain doctrine of the gospel had been inconsistent with these views, since it could only have exposed them to persecution. Whatever, therefore, the Christian doctrine might contain offensive to the prejudice of Jew or Gentile, they endeavoured to clear away by figurative interpretations: by which they pretended to bring to light the hidden sense of mysterious expressions, which the first preachers had not explained. While they called themselves by the name of Christ, they required.

quired not that the Jew should recognize the Maker of the World, the Jehovah of his fathers, in the carpenter's reputed son; nor would they incur the ridicule of the Grecian Schools, by maintaining the necessity of an atonement for forsaken and repented sins, and by holding high the efficacy of the Redeemer's sacrifice.

Such preaching was accompanied with no blessing. These pretended teachers could perform no miracles in confirmation of their doctrine. It was supported only by an affected subtlety of argument, and the studied ornaments of eloquence. To these arts they trusted, to gain credit for their innovations with the multitude. Not that the Corinthian multitude, more than the multitude of any other place, were qualified to enter into abstruse questions, to apprehend the force, or to discern the fallacy, of a long chain of argument, or to judge of the speaker's eloquence. But they had the art to persuade the people, that they excelled in argument and rhetoric. They told the people,

ple, that their reasoning was such as must convince, and their oratory such as ought to charm: and the silly people believed them, when they bore witness to themselves. St. Paul they vilified, as a man of mean abilities; who either had not himself the penetration to discern I know not what hidden meaning of the revelation, of which he was the minister; or had not the talents of a teacher in a sufficient degree, to carry his disciples any considerable length: and, through his inability, had left untouched those treasures of knowledge, which they pretended to disclose.

THIS sketch of the characters of the false teachers in the Corinthian church, and of the sort of doctrine which they taught, is the key to the Apostle's meaning, in many passages of this epistle, in which, as in the text, he may seem to speak with disparagement of wisdom, learning, and eloquence, as qualifications of little significance in a preacher of the gospel, and as instruments unfit to be employed in the service of divine truth. In all these passages,
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a particular reference is intended to the arrogant pretensions of the false teachers; to their affected learning, and counterfeit wisdom. It was not that, in the apostle's judgment, there is any real opposition between the truths of revelation, and the principles of reason; or that a man's proficiency in knowledge can be, in itself, an obstacle in the way of his conversion to the Christian faith; or that an ignorant man can be qualified to be a teacher of the Christian religion; which are the strange conclusions, which ignorance and enthusiasm, in these later ages, have drawn from the apostle's words: But he justly reprobates the folly of that pretended wisdom, which, instead of taking the light of revelation for its guide, would interpret the doctrines of revelation, by the previous discoveries of human reason: and he censures the ignorance of that learning, which imagines that the nature of the self-existent Being, and the principles of his moral government of the world, are in such sort the objects of human knowledge, as, like the motions of the planets, or the properties of light, to be open to scien-

tific investigation: and he means to express how little is the amount, and how light the authority, of the utmost wisdom that may be acquired in the schools of human learning, in comparison of that illumination, which was imparted to him, by the immediate influence of the Divine Spirit, the fountain of truth and knowledge, on his mind.

THAT this is the true interpretation of what the apostle says, or hath been supposed to say, in disparagement of human learning, may appear from this consideration. We have, in the twelfth chapter of this epistle, a distinct enumeration of the Extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit; which were nine, it seems, in number. In a subsequent part of the same chapter, we have an enumeration of Ecclesiastical Offices; nine also in number. The nine Gifts, and the nine Offices, taken in the order, in which they are mentioned, seem to correspond; the first gift belonging to the first office; the second to the second; and so on*. Only it is to be supposed, that as the authority of all inferior offices is included in the superior; so the higher

* Vide Appendix.

higher and rarer gifts contained the lower and more common. At the head of the list of Offices, as the first in authority, stand Apostles, and Prophets. By which last word are meant *expounders of the scriptures*. For that the exposition of scripture was the proper office of those, who were called prophets in the primitive church, is a thing so well understood, and so generally acknowledged, that any particular proof of it, upon the present occasion, may be spared. Corresponding to these two offices, at the head of the catalogue of gifts stand, "The Word of Wisdom," and "The Word of Knowledge." The Word of Wisdom seems to have been a talent of arguing from the natural principles of reason, for the conviction and conversion of philosophical infidels. This was the proper gift of the apostles; who were to carry the glad tidings of salvation to distant nations, among which the light of revelation had either never shone, or had at least for ages been extinguished. The Word of Knowledge was the talent of holding learned arguments from the antient prophecies, and other writings

of the old testament, to silence the objections of Jewish adversaries, and to demonstrate the consistency of the Gospel with former revelations. This was the proper gift of those, who were appointed to expound the scriptures in congregations of the faithful, once formed by the preaching of the apostles. These persons, by the way, bore the name of Prophets, because their office in the church, stood in the same relation to the office of the Apostles, as that of the prophets under the law to the office of Moses. The Jewish prophets were only guardians and expounders of the law prescribed by Moses, and of the revelation which he published. The prophets in the primitive church were not the publishers of the gospel, but expounders of what the apostles had previously taught. The apostolic gift, the word of wisdom, consisted, it should seem, in an intuitive knowledge of philosophic truth, and an insight into the harmony of the faith, which the apostles taught, with what are called the principles of natural religion. The prophetic gift, the word of knowledge, consisted in a
 prompt

prompt recollection of all parts of the sacred writings, and an insight into the harmony of the different revelations. It pleased God to commit the first preaching of the Gospel to men, whose former occupations and conditions may be supposed to have excluded them from the pursuits, and the attainments of learning, and from the advantages of education: "That the excellency of the power might be of God, not of them." But it is evident, that these gifts, with which he was pleased to adorn the two first Offices in the Christian church, were to those first preachers instead of education. For the qualities of a penetrating judgment in abstruse questions, and a ready recollection of written knowledge, which the first preachers enjoyed by the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit, are in kind the very same, which men, to whom this supernatural assistance is denied, may, with God's blessing, acquire, in a less degree, by long and diligent study. These talents existed unquestionably in the minds of the first inspired preachers, in a degree in which by the mere industry of study

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they

they cannot be attained. The Apostles were, by infinite degrees, the best informed of all Philosophers; and the Prophets of the Primitive church were the foundest of all Divines. But yet the light of Inspiration, and the light of Learning, however different in degree, as the difference indeed is inexpressible, are nevertheless the same in kind. For reason is reason, and knowledge is knowledge, in whatever manner they may be produced; the degree of more and less being the only difference, of which the things are capable. As the word of wisdom, therefore, and the word of knowledge, were to the first preachers, instead of learning; so in these later ages, when the Spirit no longer imparts his extraordinary gifts, LEARNING IS INSTEAD OF THEM.

The importance, and the necessity of it, to a Christian preacher, evidently appears from God's miraculous interposition, in the first ages, to infuse learning into the minds of those, who by education were unlearned. For if the attainments of learning were of no importance

tance to the true and effectual preaching of the Gospel; to what purpose did that God, who commanded the light to spring out of darkness, by an exertion of the same Almighty power, light up the lamp of knowledge, in the minds of uneducated men? The reason of this extraordinary interposition, in the early ages, was, that, for the first promulgation of the Gospel, no abilities to be acquired by education were sufficient for the Teacher's office. And the reason, that this extraordinary interposition hath long since ceased, is, that Christianity having once taken root in the world, those inferior abilities, which may be attained by a diligent improvement of our natural talents, are now sufficient for its support. But in all ages, if the objections of infidels are to be confuted; if the scruples of believers themselves are to be satisfied; if Moses and the Prophets are to be brought to bear witness to JESUS of Nazareth; if the calumnies of the blaspheming Jews are to be repelled, and their misinterpretations of their own books confuted; if we are to be "ready," that is, if we are to

be qualified and prepared, "to give an answer
 "to every man, that asketh us a reason of the
 "hope that is in us;" a penetration in abstruse
 questions, a quickness in philosophical dis-
 cussion, a critical knowledge of the antient
 languages, a familiar acquaintance with the
 Jewish history and with all parts of the sacred
 writings, a sound judgment, a faithful me-
 mory, and a prompt elocution, are talents
 without which, the work of an Evangelist will
 be but ill performed. When they are not infu-
 sed by inspiration, they must be acquired by di-
 ligence in study, and fervency in prayer. And
 if any in the present age imagine, that, wanting
 the advantages of education, they may be qua-
 lified for preachers of the Gospel; they are to
 be considered as Enthusiasts, unless, like the
 Apostles, they can appeal to a confirmation of
 their word by "signs and wonders following."
 Inspiration is the only means, by which they
 may be qualified for the business, in which they
 presume to meddle; and of a real inspiration,
 the power of miracles is the proper sign, and
 inseparable concomitant.

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It is the usual plea of these deluded men, when they would assert their sufficiency, while they confess their ignorance, that, however deficient they may be in other knowledge, they *know Christ*. And God forbid that, in a country professing Christ's religion, Christ should not be known by every one, in the degree necessary to his own salvation: That any one should not so know Christ, as to have a right apprehension of the necessary articles of the Christian faith; right notions of his duty to God, and to his neighbour; a stedfast faith in God's promises through Christ; such views, in short, of the Christian doctrine, as may give it its full effect upon his heart and practice. This knowledge of Christ the most illiterate hath, or ought to have, in a Christian country: and he, who hath it not, is culpable in his ignorance. But this knowledge, without which no one's condition is secure, is not that which may authorise the private Christian to assume the office of a public teacher.

It may indeed be made a question, whether any degree of knowledge may justify the officious interference of an individual, of his own pure motion, in a business of such serious concern to the community. For if it be allowed in any society, that mere ability constitutes a right to act in any particular capacity; the consequence will be, that every man will be justified in the usurpation of any office in the state, by his own opinion of his own sufficiency. The extravagance and the danger of this principle, applied in the civil departments, would be readily perceived. A man, who, from a conceit of his own abilities, should take upon him to play the Magistrate, the General, or the Privy Counsellor, without a commission regularly obtained from the source of civil power, would soon be shut up in some proper place, where he might act his fooleries in secret, without harm to his neighbour, or public discredit to himself. The reason that the extravagance and danger of the same principle is not equally perceived, when
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it is applied in the ecclesiastical polity; and that disturbers of the ecclesiastical constitution are suffered to go loose, while other madmen are confined, is only this: that the interests of the church are not so seriously considered, as those of the state; because its good government, and its disorders, come not so immediately home to the particular interests of each member of the community.

I mean not, however, at present, to enter into the question, what more than mere sufficiency may be requisite to give a man authority, to set up as a public teacher of what he really knows; or how far the rights of a commission actually existing, may be infringed by the laic's invasion of the preacher's chair. When it is considered, that not fewer than nine different ecclesiastical offices, distinguished by their different gifts, appear to have been subsisting at Corinth, when this epistle was written; and that by the consent of the most learned in ecclesiastical chronology, this epistle was written so early as the 57th year of

our LORD: it should seem, that the formation of a church, the constitution of an hierarchy, composed of different orders, which orders were appointed to distinct duties, and invested with distinct rights, was a thing of so great antiquity, as may leave no doubt remaining with any reasonable man of the divine authority, of the institution.

But what I at present insist upon, is this: That that knowledge of Christ, by which a man may be qualified to bear the office of a teacher, cannot be separated from other branches of knowledge, to which uneducated men can, in these days, make no pretensions. I contend, that it never was separated. For the word of Wisdom, and the word of Knowledge, in the Apostles and primitive Prophets, consisted not in a knowledge of revelation *only*; but, as their writings testify, in a general comprehension of all that other men acquire in a less degree by education, in those branches at least of human knowledge, which are connected with theology and morals.

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They were, perhaps, not knowing in the details of Natural Philosophy: for the argument for the Being and the Providence of God, from the visible order and harmony of the universe, is the same by whatever laws its motions may be carried on. They were not physicians or anatomists: because they had the power of curing diseases and healing wounds without medicine or art. But they were profound metaphysicians; the best of moralists; well-informed historians; accurate logicians; and excellent in that strain of eloquence, which is calculated for the conveyance of instruction, the enforcement of duty, the dissuasion of vice, the conviction of error, and the defence of truth. And whoever pretends to teach without any of these qualifications, hath no countenance from the example of the apostles, who possessed them all in an eminent degree, not from education, but from a higher source.

St. Paul, indeed, says of himself, that when he first preached the gospel to the Corinthians,

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“ He came not unto them with excellency of
 “ speech, or of wisdom”; that is, he came
 not, like the false teachers, making an ostenta-
 tious display of studied eloquence; nor boast-
 ing his proficiency in philosophy. He re-
 quired not, that the Corinthians should receive
 the testimony of God, which he delivered to
 them, as the testimony of God, because he,
 who delivered it, was a knowing man, or an
 accomplished orator. He rested not the evi-
 dence of his doctrine upon mere argument,
 nor did he think to persuade by mere elo-
 quence. For argument alone, altho’ it might
 indeed evince the consistency and reasonable-
 ness of the doctrine, could never amount to a
 proof of its heavenly origin; and the apostles
 had means of persuasion more powerful than
 eloquence: which, by the way, no modern
 teacher hath. His knowledge and eloquence,
 however necessary, were still in him but secon-
 dary qualifications: and so little was he ambi-
 tious of the fame of learning, that he deter-
 mined not “ To know any thing among them
 “ save JESUS CHRIST and him crucified.”

But

But consider what this knowledge of the apostle really contained. "To know JESUS CHRIST and him crucified," was to know, not simply to believe, but to know in such manner as to be able to teach others, that JESUS of NAZARETH was the Messiah announced by the prophets from the beginning of the world: and to understand, that the sufferings of the Messiah were the means appointed by God for man's deliverance from sin and damnation. This knowledge, therefore, of JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified, to which St. Paul laid claim, contained an accurate knowledge of the ancient prophecies; a clear apprehension of their necessary reference to the MESSIAH; a discernment of their exact completion in the person of JESUS; and an insight into that great mystery of godliness, the expiation of the actual sins of men, and the cleansing of man's sinful nature, by the shedding of the blood of CHRIST.

And who is sufficient for these things! That no study can attain this knowledge of CHRIST,

in the degree in which the apostles possessed it, he, who confesses not, hath studied CHRIST to little purpose. But he, who imagines that CHRIST may thus be known by men uninformed both by inspiration and education; or imagines that, when inspiration is wanting, education may contribute nothing at all in aid of the deficiency; that is, to make my meaning very plain, he, who imagines that, of uninspired men, the learned and the unlearned are equally qualified to be teachers of the Word of God: he, who builds this extravagant opinion upon the terms in which the apostle speaks of the knowledge of CHRIST, as the only knowledge to which he himself made pretensions, only proves, that more learning is necessary, than he is aware of, to the right apprehension of this single text.

INFERENCES naturally flow, from the doctrine which hath been asserted, of high concern to every one in this assembly. WE, who with however weak ability, fill the high station of the prophets in the primitive church; YOU, who

who are this day to be admitted to a share in that sacred office ; are admonished of the diligence, with which we must devote ourselves to study, and of the assiduity, which we must use in prayer, to acquit ourselves of the duties of our calling. The LAITY are admonished of the folly and the danger of deserting the ministry of those, who have been rightly separated to that holy service, in the vain hope of edifying under their instruction, who cannot be absolved of the crime of schism, upon any better plea than that of ignorance.—To allege the Apostles as instances of illiterate preachers, is of all fallacies the grossest. Originally perhaps they were men of little learning—fishermen—tent-makers—excisemen. But when they began to preach, they no longer were illiterate. They were rendered learned in an instant, without previous study of their own, by miracle. The gifts, which we find placed by an Apostle himself, at the head of their qualifications, were evidently analogous to the advantages of education. Whatever their previous character had been, the Apostles, when they

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became

became preachers, became learned. They were of all preachers the most learned. It is, therefore, by proficiency in learning, accompanied with an unreserved submission of the understanding to the revealed word, but it is by Learning, not by the want or the neglect of it, that any modern teacher may attain to some distant resemblance of those inspired Messengers of God.



A P P E N D I X.

1 Cor. XII. 8, 9, 10.

THE *word of wisdom*,—the talent of arguing, from the natural principles of reason, for the conversion of philosophical infidels; *the word of knowledge*, the talent of holding learned arguments from the ancient prophecies and the writings of the Old Testament, for the conversion of Jewish infidels. *Faith*,—a depth and accuracy of understanding, in the general scheme of the Christian Revelation, for the improvement and edification of believers. *The gifts of healing*, and *the working of miracles*, for the purpose of making new converts, and displaying the extent of the power of CHRIST. *Prophecy*, or the talent of foreseeing future events, for the purpose of providing against the calamities, whether worldly or spiritual, that might threaten particular churches, such as famines, pestilence, wars, persecutions, heresies. *Discerning of spirits*, for the better government of the church, and *the gift of tongues*, and *the interpretation of tongues*, which seem to have been very generally dispersed, that every Christian might be qualified to argue with the learned Jews in the synagogues, from the original scriptures, especially when the Jew thought proper to appeal from the Greek of the Septuagint to the Hebrew text.

In these very remarkable passages, the Apostle reckons up nine distinct gifts of the Holy Spirit, all of the extraordinary kind. In the 28th verse, he enumerates just as many

Ecclesiastical offices. The gifts and the offices, taken in the order in which they are mentioned, seem to correspond:

Gifts.	Offices.
I. The word of <i>wisdom</i> .	<i>Apostles</i>
II. The word of <i>knowledge</i> .	<i>Prophets</i> i. e. <i>expounders of the Scriptures of O. T.</i>
III. <i>Faith</i>	<i>Teachers of christianity</i>
IV. <i>Miracles</i>	<i>Workers of miracles</i>
V. <i>Healing</i>	<i>Healers</i>
VI. <i>Prophecies or predictions</i>	<i>Helps</i> <i>such as Mark, Tychicus, Onesimus, &c.</i>
VII. <i>Discerning of spirits</i>	<i>Governments</i>
VIII. <i>Tongues</i>	{ <i>Gifted with tongues in various ways</i>
IX. <i>Interpretation of tongues</i>	

The fourth and fifth gifts, miracles and healing, seem to have changed places in the 9th and 10th verses. Miracles, I think, must take place as the *genus*, and healing must rank below it, as the *species*. Accordingly in the 28th verse, miracles, or powers, are mentioned before healings. With this slight alteration, the list of gifts in the 8th, 9th and 10th verses, seems to answer exactly to the list of offices in the 28th; only it is to be supposed, that as all inferior offices are included in the superior, so all the higher and rarer gifts contain the lower and more common.

Dr. Lightfoot, if I mistake not, hath remark'd this parallelism of gifts and offices in his *Horæ Hebraicæ*.



